



THE

KNIGHT



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VICTORY! ALBERT PICK WRITES

The Lithuanian Numismatic Association has received an important letter from the author of the standard reference, "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money," Albert Pick, of Munich, West Germany. The numerous letters and contacts LNA members and supporters made with collectors around the world concerning the insulting cataloging move made by Krause publications, have resulted in some positive indications.

This editor wrote Mr. Pick on behalf of the LNA and Baltic collectors everywhere concerning the dumping of Lithuania and the countries of Latvia and Estonia by Colin Bruce II in the Standard Catalog of World Coins. At press time, we have received this reply:

Dear Mr. Passic:

Thank you for your kind letter!

I also plead that the listings of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania remain in my catalog in their proper alphabetical order and I wrote so to Colin Bruce. I think we will be successful and no change will be made!

Best wishes, yours truly,
Albert Pick.

We thank all our members and friends who have written Krause publications, Albert Pick, and others concerning the unethical cataloging method used in the coin catalog. If you haven't written Krause publications yet, we would encourage you do so; although they have stated that they will continue with their so called "geographic policy" which we call pro-Soviet, at least we took preventative action and prevented them from changing the Pick paper money book. In the past month we have been notified of major Baltic organizations raising this issue in their publications. One Boston area radio station broadcasted our entire editorial, encouraging collectors to write Krause publications. Hopefully that numismatic publishing firm will see the error of their ways, and properly list Lithuania under the "L's" where it is supposed to be. Until then, we shall not be silent!

NOTES SOLD

In the auction held last month at the New York show, the Lithuanian 1,000 litų of 1924 in XF condition went for \$850. The 50 centų "Pavyzdys-bevertis" note of 1922 went for \$225, and the World War II "punktė" ration coupon was unsold.

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF THE KNIGHT: Lithuanian paper money "trends!"

KARYS WRITES

Jonas K. Karys, director of the Lithuanian mint 1936-1939, and Lithuanian numismatic author, has written us to announce his retirement from active participation in Lithuanian numismatics. Dated October 11, 1980, the letter is quoted here in its entirety:

Honored Friends:

The unavoidable time has come to loudly announce: I HAVE GROWN OLD. In connection therewith, all kinds of infirmities have descended upon me which finally have practically incapacitated me. My heart, eyes, ears, bones, etc., have ceased to serve me; my memory, once splendid, begins to fade. And I do not feel that the burden of my years in the short remaining future, would grow lighter, or in some fashion, improve...

So pardon me if for some past time I have been unable (and I do not believe I ever will be able) to be with you in your activity. I barely manage to accomplish my daily duties at home. And it is necessary to assist my wife, who now enters her 9th decade of her life, and is able to do anything even less than I, can hardly control her feet, and long has supported her heart with pills.

My heartfelt congratulations to you (and to all other youths, in full health and strength, Lithuanians), to labor intelligently, for our beloved Fatherland's welfare, without those collaborators who naturally drop from the ranks, never to return...It was over so, and it is, and will continue to be!

Remain well!

Jonas K. Karys

Bridgeport, Connecticut

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: Special thanks to Val Matelis, who translated the above letter into English. Karys' writings have been the basis for our lengthy research into Lith. numismatics. We are continuing to send Mr. Karys every issue of TK complimentary, so he can follow our efforts in the science of numismatics. Without his original research, we would not be where we are today.

2. The following article, written by Bank of Lithuania president Vladas Jurgutis, appeared in the September 7, 1928 issue of The Banker, pages 272-276. Advertisements from various Lithuanian financial institutions found in that issue appear throughout this issue of The Knight.

Banking Situation in Lithuania

By the Governor of the Bank of Lithuania

THE demand for credit in Lithuania is fulfilled by the nine more important banks, eighteen mutual credit associations, and about 500 minor credit societies, besides the Government Savings Institution and some private banking houses. The balance-sheet of Lietuvos Bankas shows at present a balance of more than 180,000,000 litas, i.e. approximately the total summary of balances of all other credit institutions of the country. The Lietuvos Bankas began its activity on October 1, 1922, when the litas currency was introduced and the Lietuvos Bankas began to function as a bank of issue. The capital stock consists of 120,000 shares of 100 litas each, making a total share capital of 12,000,000 litas. (The litas is equal to 0.10 U.S. dollar.) Besides, the Lietuvos Bankas has accumulated a reserve capital up to 1,200,000 litas. At the close of 1922, bank-notes in circulation amounted to 50,250,000 litas; on August 1, 1928, to 83,940,000 litas. At the close of 1922 the cover for bank-notes in circulation was 33,140,000 litas, and the last balance-sheet showed a cover of 78,890,000 litas.

The fluctuations of the emission of Lietuvos Bankas are shown on the attached table. As cover for bank-notes, besides gold holdings and balances abroad, the stock of silver coins held by the bank is included and calculated at 50 per cent. of the nominal value. The rate of exchange of the litas has remained stable during all the time, and the occasional fluctuations did not exceed the usual fluctuations of gold standard currencies. This is shown by the table of quotations of the litas at the Berlin and London Exchanges, and of the rates of exchange of the dollar and pound sterling at the Kaunas Exchange:

		Rate of Litass at London for 1 Pound	Rate of Litass at Berlin Mark equiv. for L.t. 100.	Rate of U.S. Dollar at Kaunas Exchange Litass equiv. for 1 Dollar	Rate of English Pound at Kaunas Exchange Litass equiv. for 1 Pound
Gold parity	..	48'67	41'98	10'00	48'67
January 1927	..	48'96	41'51	10'11	49'16
June 1927	..	48'75	41'69	10'08	49'00
January 1928	..	49'00	41'60	10'06	49'00
June 1928	..	49'00	41'62	10'03	49'00
July 1928	..	49'00	41'61	10'04	48'96

Continued on page 5...

THE KNIGHT. Volume IV, No. 4, issue #22. Frank Passic Albion, Michigan EDITOR. Robert J. Douchis, Baltimore, Maryland, DIRECTOR. Official publication of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association, P.O. Box 612, Columbia, MD. 21045. Subscription to Vol. IV. a donation of \$10 or more U.S. and Canada; \$20 overseas. Published bi-monthly. 6 issues each volume, plus translation of 1959 book included.

UNION OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES IN LITHUANIA

KAUNAS

Vytauto Prospekt, 33 No.

Cable Address: LIETUKIS

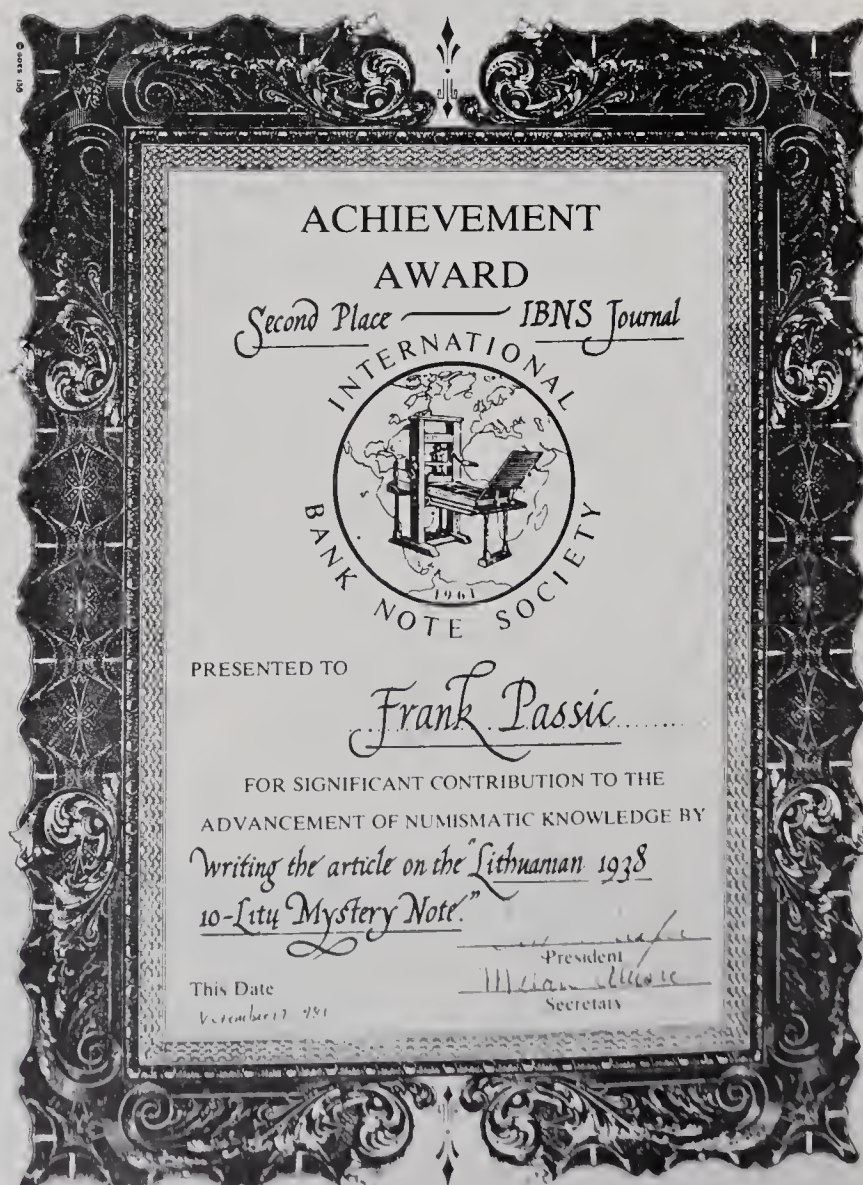
Departments for Trade Finance
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EXPORT OF GRAIN, FLAX,
LINSEED, VARIOUS SEEDS,
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IBNS AWARD

As announced in the last issue, the International Bank Note Society has awarded a 2nd place literary award to Frank Passic for his article, "The Lithuanian 1938 10 Litu Mystery Banknote," which appeared in the Winter 1981 (Vol. 19) issue of the Journal. Below is reproduced the award certificate presented Mr. Passic:



ECCLESIASTICAL MEDAL BY PETRAS RIMŠA

Struck in Bronze: 25, 36, 60, 75, 100 mm.
Minted at Hugugna Bro., LeLocle, Switzerland.
Medalist: Petras Rimša

Lithuania became a "Christian" nation in the year 1251, when soon-to-be-king Mindaugas entered into relations with the Holy See, and Pope Innocent IV established a diocese of Lithuania. In 1252 Mindaugas was crowned king in the name of Innovent IV, who declared him to be a "special son of the Holy Roman Church."

The first Bishop of Lithuania, Kristijonas (Christian), received his appointment on July 17, 1251. A priest of the Teutonic Order, K. operated under the auspices of the German archbishop of Riga. After Mindaugas complained to the Holy See, the Lithuanian diocese was made directly dependent on the Holy See in Rome.

During the era of independent Lithuania, the country was never able to secure all of the Lithuanian inhabited areas included in the legal boundaries of the country, primarily due to the large sections occupied by Lithuania's enemy, Poland. Lithuanians in the Church sought to prevent the Holy See from recognizing Polish territorial conquests, but were unsuccessful. The arch-diocese of Vilnius was transferred to Poland, and Poles there forced Lithuanian Bishop Jurgis Matulaitis to resign.

In order to appease the Lithuanian church somewhat, Pope Pius XI raised Matulaitis to the honor of titular archbishop and named him apostolic visitator to Lithuania. Matulaitis then formulated a plan which established 5 dioceses within Lithuania, with the metropolitan see located in the temporary capital at Kaunas. The ecc. province of Lith. received official blessing from Pius XI on April 26, 1926. A concordat was drawn up the next year.

Relations with the Holy See lasted only until 1931, when the Lith. government ordered Apostolic nuncio out of the country, in a conflict over interpretation of the concordat of 1927, with respect to freedom of Catholic action. Relations were restored in September of 1939, under Pope Pius XII.

OBVERSE DESCRIPTION: Rimša's medal entitled "In Commemoration of the First Ecclesiastical Province of Lithuania" is one of his most beautiful and popular works. In addition to bronze, it also comes in gold-wash, and in silver. The obverse bears the image (on the left) of Pope Innocent IV, who founded the first Bishopric of Lithuania, and the image (right) of Pope Pius XI, who founded the first Metropolitan See in Lithuania.. In the background can be seen the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. At the top is the personal coat of arms of Pius XI. The inscription, "INNOCENTIUS IV PIUS XI" is found in large lettering around the



perimeter. Under that is the Latin phrase, "Servite Domino in leafitia."

REVERSE DESCRIPTION: The reverse contains the images of Bishop Christian (Kristijonas), the first Lithuanian bishop (left), K. established his see in pagan Samogitia, but only remained there until 1259, when he left for Germany and ended his days in 1270 as a suffragan bishop of Mainz.

In the foreground is the image of Archbishop Juozapas Skvireckas (1873-1959), the first Archbishop of Lithuania. The personal arms of Skvireckas appears on the top. The inscription reads, "Iš priesų rankų išsiliusavę drasiau tarnausime Jam," which means, "Having Liberated ourselves from the enemy's hands, we shall serve with more courage." The names "VYSKUPAS KRISTIJONAS (Bishop Kristijonas)" and "ARKIVY-SKUPAS JUOZAPAS" (Archbishop Juozapas) appear around the perimeter. A photo of the reverse of this medal appears on the next page. Here is the biography of Skvireckas, from the Encyclopedia Lituanica:

SKVIRECKAS, Juozapas (1873-1959), first Roman Catholic archbishop and metropolitan of Kaunas, translator of the Bible into Lithuanian, born in Rimkūnai, county of Panevėžys, on Sept. 18, 1873. He studied theology at the Samogitian Seminary of Kaunas (1892-96) and at St. Petersburg Theological Academy, from which he received his master's degree in 1900. He was or-

Continued on next page....



dained to the priesthood in Kaunas on June 24, 1899. Two years later he was appointed professor of the Samogitian Seminary, where he taught exegesis, catechism, and Latin. In 1911 he was raised to the rank of canon and in 1914 to that of prelate of the Samogitian diocesan chapter. During World War I he was forced to withdraw with the chapter to Smolensk and later to Tula, where he concerned himself with refugee care and eventually their return to Lithuania. After the war Skvireckas was appointed vicar general of the Samogitian diocese and in 1919 was consecrated titular bishop of Ceramo and suffragan bishop of Samogitia. Upon the creation of the Lithuanian church province (1926), to which he had contributed greatly, Bishop Skvireckas was appointed archbishop and metropolitan of Kaunas, the first such office in the country's history. In 1931 Pope Pius XI designated him assistant to the pontifical throne and count of Rome.

Archbishop Skvireckas governed the Kaunas archdiocese for almost the entire period of Lithuanian independence, adhering to traditional practice of entrusting the function of maintaining day-to-day relations with priests and laity to officials of the archdiocesan chapter. Some of the younger clergy and intellectual laity at times voiced an expectation of stronger action and clearer and more specific guidance from the archbishop, especially after the authoritarian Nationalist regime caused a rupture in Lithuania's relations with the Vatican (see

Roman Catholics). Archbishop Skvireckas headed lengthy negotiations with the regime, exhibiting extraordinary patience in the process, until events again brought a normalization of relations. In 1934 an archdiocesan synod was called to deliberate on matters of pastoral work and Catholic action. In the same year, under his leadership, the first Eucharistic Congress of Lithuania was held at Kaunas, attracting a large mass of faithful, numerous organizations, government workers and administration officials. At the same time, from 1922 on, Skvireckas was full professor at the Theology-Philosophy Faculty of the University of Kaunas, lecturing on the Sacred Scriptures. He also gave lectures at the Kaunas Theological Seminary, attended by clerics from the dioceses of Kaunas, Panevėžys, and Kaišiadorys. Through his efforts the seminary's facilities were enlarged, a new archdiocesan residence was built, and the basilica of Kaunas was renovated. He was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science (1922), serving as its president until 1926. His plans to establish a Lithuanian college in

Rome and an Institute for Religious Culture in Kaunas were prevented from realization by World War II. During the Soviet Russian and German Nazi occupations (1940-44), he made approaches to the ruling circles on behalf of those suffering from persecution and religious restrictions, even directing an appeal to American bishops for aid.

portees. In 1944, as the Soviets returned to stay in Lithuania, he was forced to leave. From the spring of 1945 on, he lived at the convent of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul at Zams in the Tyrolean Alps (Austria), where he died on Dec. 3, 1959.

Skvireckas was less the ecclesiastical administrator than the writer-theologian, preferring to be engaged in quiet scholarly work. Much of his life was spent on the monumental task of translating the Bible into Lithuanian, a project he began barely after having graduated from the Theological Academy (1900). First he completed the translation of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles (1906), which were the texts most urgently needed for services. Subsequently he translated (1911-35) the rest of the Scriptures, publishing a total of six volumes, each with an extensive commentary. For use by the general public he prepared a popular edition of the New Testament, which appeared in 1922 and again in 1936. While in exile, he revised it (1947) and published a retranslated edition of the Psalms (1949). Finally, two volumes of a new edition of the Old Testament were published in 1955-58. Before becoming deeply involved in his life's work, he also authored roughly a half-dozen religious books, including biographies of St. Pius X (1904), St. Paul the Apostle (1907), and Bishop Merkelis Giedraitis (1908). Essays on theological topics appeared in scholarly and popular magazines throughout most of his life.

The publication BRIDGES, which experienced some publishing difficulties in the past year, is again publishing. It is published bi-monthly by the Lithuanian-American Community, and keeps people of Lithuanian descent up-to-date with happenings concerning Lithuanian and Lithuanians around the world. The price is \$5 for one year. Write: BRIDGES, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207.

The Lithuanian National Foundation publishes a monthly bulletin, ELTA, which offers information and documentation on current events and problems concerning Lithuania. ELTA deals with more political items affecting the Lithuanian community. Those interested in receiving ELTA may write: ELTA, Information Bulletin, 1611 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 2, Washington, D.C. 20009. Request the English version. (also available in Lithuanian, French, Italian, Spanish). Mention the LNA When writing.

The Lietuvos Bankas, in its credit policy, supports mainly those branches of national production which manufacture goods for the needs of the home market and for export purposes, i.e. local industry and the firms exporting agricultural products. From 1925 the discount rate has been 7 per cent.; besides, a commission is charged. Yet this additional charge is imposed only on discounts for import purposes, whereas discounts in connection with exports are made at 7 per cent. net, without charging any commission or other expenses. Thereby a variable discount rate has been created, which, however, practically does not exceed 9 per cent. per annum. Having in view that private credit institutions' discount rate is not less than 12 per cent., the credit facilities granted by the Lietuvos Bankas are the cheapest.

CIRCULATION OF BANK-NOTES AND THEIR COVER, 1922-28

Year and Month	Bank-notes in circulation. Millions of Lit	Reserves of Lietuvos Bankas for bank-notes in circulation. Millions of Lit		Cover for bank-notes	
		Reserve in gold and gold standard currencies	Including bar gold	% in gold	% total cover
31/12/1922 ..	30'23	33'14	15'19	50'25	109'65
31/3/1923 ..	42'36	44'42	15'82	37'35	104'86
30/6 " ..	48'58	51'00	16'20	33'53	106'85
30/9 " ..	53'56	53'71	16'39	30'60	100'28
31/12 " ..	60'07	63'10	16'45	27'38	105'04
31/3/1924 ..	71'25	80'91	24'13	33'87	113'56
30/6 " ..	67'86	79'92	24'48	36'07	117'77
30/9 " ..	74'48	75'90	25'38	34'08	101'90
31/12 " ..	92'98	93'07	30'78	33'10	100'10
31/3/1925 ..	94'03	89'58	32'86	34'95	95'27
30/6 " ..	79'28	67'94	33'35	42'07	85'70
30/9 " ..	81'09	58'44	33'65	41'50	72'07
31/12 " ..	81'92	65'43	32'29	39'42	79'87
31/3/1926 ..	90'04	72'24	30'29	33'64	80'23
30/6 " ..	79'47	60'90	30'50	38'38	76'63
30/9 " ..	75'84	56'65	31'05	40'94	74'70
31/12 " ..	86'79	71'11	31'36	36'13	81'93
31/3/1927 ..	91'11	75'95	31'40	34'46	83'36
30/6 " ..	87'08	74'05	31'65	36'35	85'04
30/9 " ..	88'47	73'15	32'36	36'58	82'68
31/12 " ..	96'61	87'08	33'20	34'36	90'14
31/3/1928 ..	101'54	90'32	34'20	33'68	88'95
30/6 " ..	85'95	80'41	34'24	39'83	93'55
15/8 " ..	83'94	78'89	34'25	40'80	93'98

On July 1 last the credits granted totalled 84,400,000 litas, viz., 33,300,000 litas (=39 per cent.) to industrial undertakings, 20,000,000 litas (=23 per cent.) to export trades, and the balance to other branches. In 1927 the credits granted by Lietuvos Bankas amounted to 60,000,000 litas only.

The balances of all other credit institutions (excluding the credit institutions of the Memel District) presented on January 1, 1928, a total of 174,000,000 litas. The paid-up capital of these institutions exceeded 49,000,000 litas, and the total of their reserve capital was about 2,500,000 litas. Deposits amounted to 65,000,000, creditors' accounts to 27,000,000, correspondents' accounts to 13,000,000, discounts and advances to 113,500,000, and securities to 20,000,000 litas.

From the total of the said balances 118,000,000 litas are made up by joint-stock companies, 16,000,000 litas by mutual credit associations, and 40,000,000 by other credit institutions.

Postage Stamps of Lithuania. A history of Lithuanian postage stamps. How many know about how the Lithuanians overprinted Soviet Russia's stamps that became Lithuania's Liberation stamps in 1941? Hardcover, all stamps illustrated. Price: \$16.

Soviet Genocide in Lithuania. By Joseph Pajaujgis-Javis. A comprehensive study well documented of the policies of national and cultural genocide practiced by the Soviet Union. A book to be read by everyone, to be donated to libraries and important personages in our government. Price: \$12.

Books shipped anywhere by: C. Matuzas, 107-33 117th st. Richmond Hill, N.Y. 11419. When writing mention the LNA.

LETTERS

I have been very intersted in Lithuanian history & numismatics ever since I began researching the Lithuanian side of my family tree. Thank you for a copy of The Knight. Keep up the good work. I'm looking forward to future issues.

---Brian J. Kenny, Ellington, CT.

I received the copies of the translations and the two copies of The Knight. I am pleased with all of the material and find it very interesting.

---Edward W. Dedek, Berwyn, Ill.

Mr. B. Lazauskas of Bethlehem, Conn. sent us a copy of The Knight, containing your article, "Standard Catalog of World Coins Dumps Lithuania!" which I am forwarding to the editor of our ELTA News Bulletin. We thank you for a fine article, and Mr. Lazauskas for sending it on to us. I sent a copy of the article to Dr. S.A. Bačkis, Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Lithuania, Washington, D.C.

---M.S. Samatas, ELTA office manager, Washington, D.C.

Karl Stephens has a nice selection of Lithuanian coins for sale, both modern and medieval. Send your want list (with condition desired) to him, and mention the LNA.



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(Po. Adv.)

MEET THE DIRECTORS

This month we got the directors of the Bank of Lithuania together to pose for a picture... well, we dug one up from our archives, anyway. From left to right are: Jonas Masiulis, bank president Vladas Stašinskas, Juozas Paknys, and Ignas Musteikis.

The signature of Masiulis appears only on the 1930 20 Litu (P-27). Not much is known about him, except that he was on the board in the early 1930's.

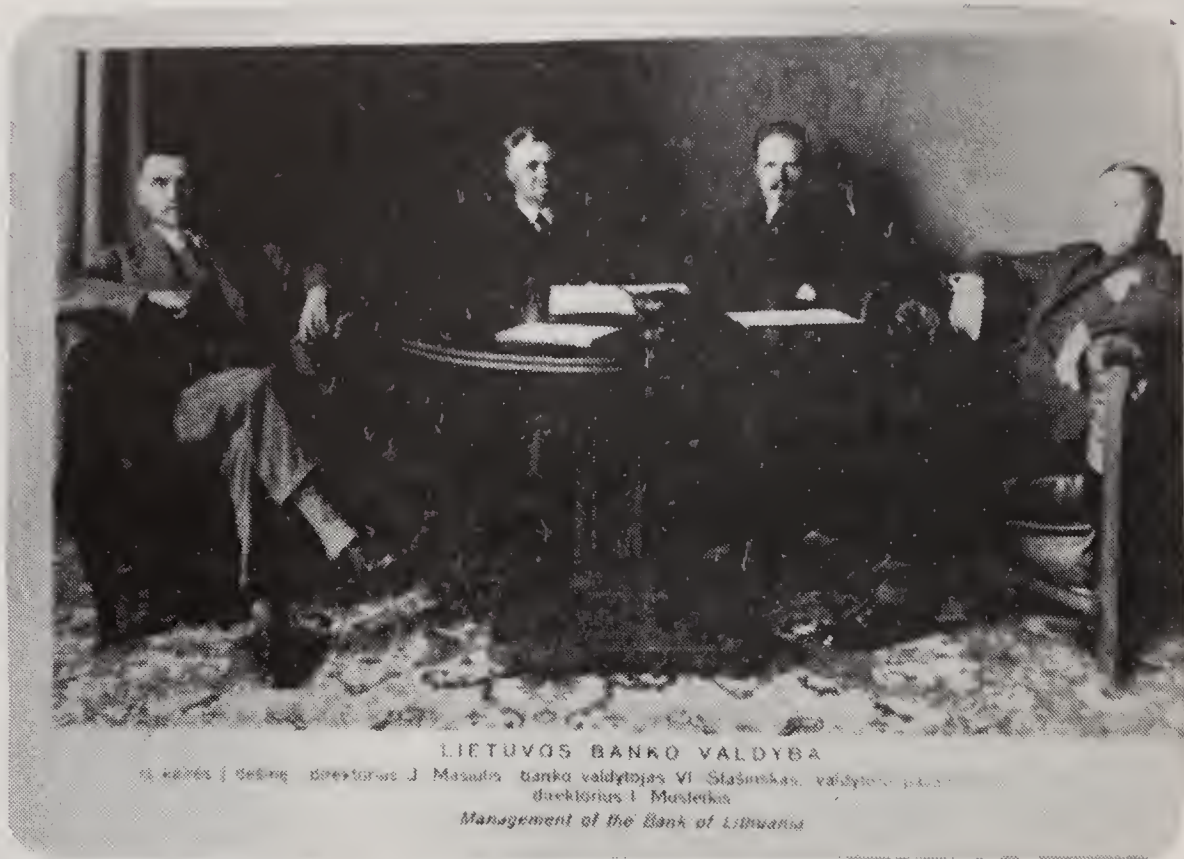
The signature of Stašinskas appears on the 1930 20 Litu (F-27), and on the 1938 10 Litu (P-28).

The signature of Paknys appears on all Lithuanian banknotes bearing signatures, starting with the 1922 permanent notes printed in Czechoslovakia.

Paknys was born in Pakniškės on September 10, 1883. After graduating from the Institute of Commerce in St. Petersburg (Russia) he returned to Lithuania in 1912 to work for the Commercial Bank in Kaunas. After Lithuanian independence was restored, he served briefly as Minister of Labor and Welfare, and then Deputy Minister of Finance, Trade, and Industry. Appointed to serve on the board of directors of the Bank of Lithuania in 1922, he subsequently became vice-president of the bank from 1926-29, acting president from 1929-39, and president from 1939-40. Under Paknys, the Lithuanian litas was able to retain its value despite worldwide depression.

During World War II and the German occupation, Paknys convinced the Germans to have him re-establish the Bank of Lithuania. However, Germany, seeing the bank did not work to their wishes, closed it in 1942. After that Paknys joined the underground resistance movement and tabulated war losses in Lithuania. After the second Soviet occupation in 1944, Paknys went to Germany and worked for the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania. He died in Reutlingen on January 1, 1948.

The signature of Ignas Musteikis appears only on the 20 Litu of 1930 (P-27). Biographical information about director Stašinskas has already been feature in The Knight. Anyone having information about Jonas Masiulis or Ignas Musteikis is welcome to sent it in to us, so we can share it with our readers.



The Board of Governors of the Bank of Lithuania



Juozas Paknys (1921 photo).

Lithuanian Banking and Credit

By Nikol Lipčius

[Director of the Lithuanian Treasury]

WE do not here propose to touch upon the operations of the Bank of Lithuania, which is the supreme factor in the regulation of the money market and credit; this aspect of Lithuania's economic and financial evolution will be dealt with more exhaustively elsewhere. We shall merely mention that on October 5, 1927, this important institution of the national economic life completed five years of useful labour.

On December 31, 1927, the following credit establishments were operating in Lithuania: eight joint-stock banks, two co-operative banks, eighteen mutual credit, and 426 small credit associations. On the same day the combined balances of the foregoing twenty-nine credit establishments (small credit associations are not included) totalled 352,000,000 lits. To enable the reader to study the working of these concerns, we give below the more important items of their combined balances for both 1927 and 1926.

Thus, discount operations during the year increased from 37,900,000 lits to 54,200,000 lits. In 1927 loans were granted for 27,000,000 lits more than in 1926.

With an increase in the liquidation of banking capital the value of immovable property tended to decline.

ASSETS	1927 Lits	1926 Lits
1. Cash	13,300,000	13,000,000
2. Discount	54,200,000	37,900,000
3. Loans and special current accounts ..	104,400,000	77,400,000
4. Correspondents	55,100,000	64,400,000
5. Private effects and foreign currency	67,300,000	62,200,000
6. Immovable property	14,800,000	16,900,000
7. Other assets	43,500,000	54,000,000
Balance	352,600,000	326,800,000

Among "other liabilities" figure the bank-notes that were in circulation in 1927, viz. 96,600,000 lits, and in 1926, 86,700,000 lits.

LIABILITIES	1927 Lits	1926 Lits
1. Capital stock and reserve capital ..	93,100,000	95,000,000
2. Rediscount	7,000,000	4,900,000
3. Correspondents	17,100,000	43,800,000
4. Deposits	28,300,000	19,100,000
5. Current accounts	85,900,000	54,500,000
6. Other liabilities	121,200,000	109,500,000
Balance	352,600,000	326,800,000

X 2

During the year deposits increased by 9,200,000 lits; and deposits on current account, 31,400,000 lits. The total balance increased, as will be seen from the foregoing figures, by 25,800,000 lits. In 1927 the net profits came to 3,500,000 lits, in 1926 to 2,600,000 lits.

When the period of currency inflation terminated and a stable national currency (the litas) was introduced in the autumn of 1922, the banks were left wholly without deposits. Credit institutions did not enjoy confidence. In the course of time, however, popular savings re-appeared and bank deposits again began to increase. The appended table will show the development of the deposits in the more important private and co-operative banks:

CERTIFICATE

7.

Due to deadline problems, we were unable to begin this issue the article by Vince Alones and Henry Gaidis on the Order of Gediminas, as part of our military orders and decorations series.

Presented on page 8 of this issue is a reproduction of an original certificate, 3rd class, for the Order of Gediminas. This award was conferred upon Priest Ignas Albavičius in 1937, and the certificate with decoration is now on exhibit at the Balzekas Museum. A translation of the certificate will appear in the next issue of The Knight.

The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, 4012 Archer Ave. in Chicago, Ill (60632), has recently placed its entire collection of Lithuanian orders and decorations on exhibit to the public, for the first time. Included is an Order of Vytautas the Great, presented to the late Dr. Alexander M. Račkus, noted Lithuanian numismatist. If you are in the Chicago area, by all means drop by and view this fantastic collection. The museum is open daily, including weekends from 1 to 4 pm. Or you can call (312) 847-2441 for further information.

The museum also has a nice selection of Lithuanian coins for sale; write for prices, and mention the LNA when writing.

Years	Deposits, fixed and for an unlimited period Lits	Deposits on current account Lits	Total Lits
1923	1,800,000	11,800,000	13,600,000
1924	6,300,000	19,700,000	26,000,000
1925	23,800,000	34,700,000	58,500,000
1926	17,600,000	19,400,000	37,000,000
1927	19,100,000	54,500,000	73,600,000

The reduction of deposits in 1926 was evoked by the monetary crisis due to a poor harvest, which manifested itself as a consequence of economic depression. In 1927, the total bank deposits again increased. More free money appeared in the country, credit conditions improved, and this year the banks can more easily satisfy the demands of trade and industry for short-term credits.

L I E T U V O S R E S P U B L I K A

DIDŽIOJO LIETUVOS KUNIGAIKŠČIO
GEDIMINO ORDINAS



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS PREZIDENTO AKTU

Kunigas
Ignas Alkavičius

UŽ NUOPELNUS LIETUVAI APDOVANOJAMAS

DIDŽIOJO LIETUVOS KUNIGAIKŠČIO

GEDIMINO ORDINO *višio* GARBĖS ŽENKLU

J. Bilius

ORDINŲ KANCLERIS

Ed. Malinauskas

ORDINŲ REIKALŲ VEDĖJAS

RESPUBLIKOS PREZIDENTO AKTAS PADARYTAS

KAUNE 1937 m. *gegužės* mėn 4 d. 507 NR

amassed all available information, and treading to no one, we resolve to add here our own "tripence."

First of all, the border. It cannot be any kind, but only the earliest used in Lithuania, historical. Its basis must be the form of a Lithuanian shield, found upon Vytautas' seals (See Figure 65/6-7) and on coins (Figure 67/1.) Very close to that was a framed Vytis in the past (not naming other specimens) upon Jogaila's gravestone, in Cracow (See Figure 67/3). True, this shield is somewhat short compared to its width, but the lines are in order. In independent Lithuania, they were time after time fixed (and alas, often ruined); on coins, however, the Vytis' shield with the doubled cross came out entirely satisfactorily. That form of shield should be retained and the Vytis itself should be placed in it.

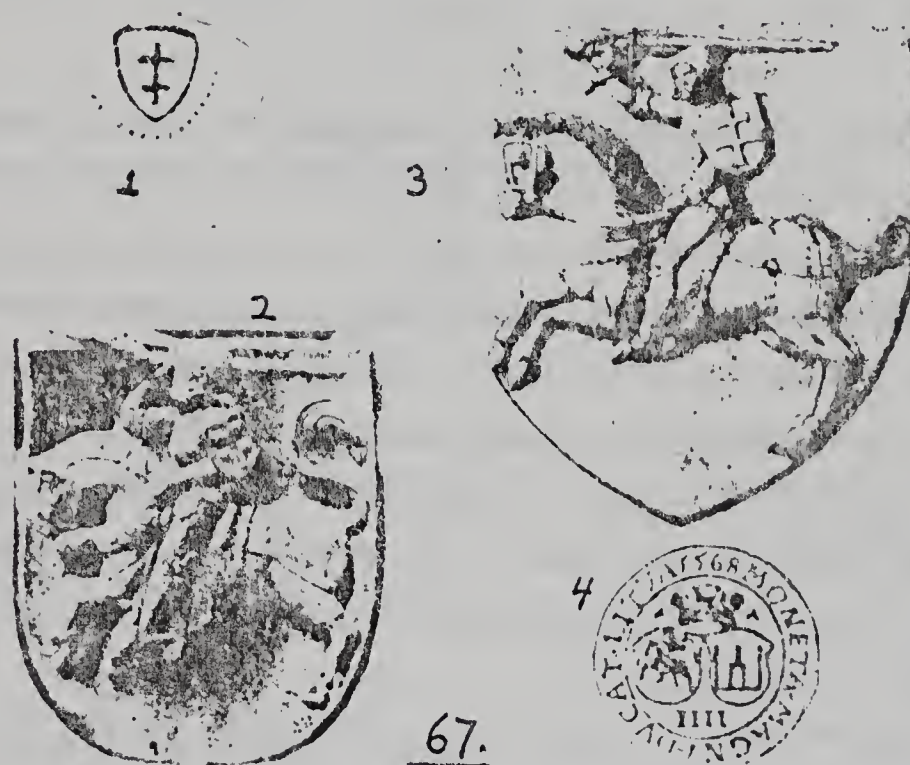


FIGURE 67. Forms of the Lithuanian shield. 1) Vytautas' shield, immortalized upon his coins, 2) The Vytis with the doubled cross upon Grand Duke Casimier's grave; 3) Both shields upon Jogailas grave; 4) Shields framing national insignia, repeated upon the coins of later Lithuanian Grand Dukes.

After the shield lost its significance in battle and in single combat, during the 16th century, it gained considerably in heraldry. Here it began to be pictured in the style of the day, correctly or more picturesquely and soon became an abstract part of heraldry ornamentation. Its form was changed in many different ways in the Grand Duchy, touched up, turned all around. But those "changes" or "embellishments" to the shield do not in any way obligate us. To us it is nationally becoming and historically important that the shield's form in itself should represent Lithuanian moderation, which reaches farthest in the past. All passing distortions of form were foreign to the Lithuanian nation in the past, and so remain.



FIGURE 68. Stylized, therefore, examples of foolish distortions of shields, errors creeping into Lithuanian heraldry.

The border to be placed around the shield of the Lithuanian Vytis should be colored bronze. No "nails" are necessary in that border (as on the border of the double cross on the shield) and are not justified historically. The basis of metal shields was made of a single sheet so an enemy's broadsword or javelin would slide off more easily. Later, in decorating the crest, all kinds of bizarre fantasies were added. However, a combat shield, as it was in the days of Vytautas, had only a few rivets by which the necessary thongs for gripping were attached. These rivets were so flattened that they were entirely invisible under the shield's paint or oxide.

The rider's pose was always the same: the steed in a swift gallop, the rider, as if to strike with the upraised broadsword whomever he was pursuing. And we must not forget that the Vytis is the immortal crest of Lithuania. In that context, the Vytis rider cannot be conceived as any particular Grand Duke [although it was originally Kęstutis],

but just as the continual ruler of historic Lithuania. So that whether we enlarge it, or color the crest, we do not know what his countenance should be (young or old, bearded or without), we must necessarily leave it within a helmet, unseen. The helmet, ribbons and all the rider's armour are generally white, but with clearly metal parts, not excepting his spurs, broadsword, the steed's shoes, all of which may be rendered with a tinge of well-scrubbed steel (milky). The shoulder shield's form is exactly the same as that of the entire Vytis; excepting that it will be proportionately somewhat longer (for protective purposes). Its background color---same as the armour, and the narrow border and the doubled cross---bronze. The steed is entirely white. The saddle, the reins, the stirrup, all the leather straps to hold the saddle, the broadsword's scabbard, the bit and curb--all bronze. One and the same color lessens an undesirable diversity of colors, and at the same time tones closely as much the tinge of bronze, used in Lithuania for many ages, as well as the leather tanned and twisted. There is no need to fear an impression of over-bronzing, since it is perfectly obvious that no one will consider leather straps to be of pure bronze. While the bronzing of all the steed's accoutrements and tinsel is historical and true.⁸²

The saddlecloth which was upon the Knight's crest in later years, appeared without any important reason and covered half the steed, can be conveniently forgotten. Since it is not seen either on Kęstutis' or Vytautas' coins struck with the Horseman's portrait, is neither on the early seals of Vytautas, Jogaila, nor direct descendants of Jogaila, it is not observed on the official insignia of the newest coins of the Lithuanian Republic.

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Such decorating habits in Lithuania have survived even to our day. But the coloring of any part of the Knight by "gilding" is thoughtfully opposed to historical truth: neither at the first appearance of the Knight, nor at any other time, Lithuanians did not have any gold mines, so there is not the least basis for presuming that the Lithuanian horseman, even though it would be the Grand Duke himself, could have had the accoutrements of his steed burnished in gold. Bronze---that's another matter. There was never any lack of it from the bronze age on. And polished enough, it shone quite beautifully. The historian Alekna accented (or highlighted) ornaments of bronze. (Lithuanian History, Kaunas, 1918, Page 6). Archeological excavations have given new findings. In a grave of a 4th century Lithuanian, dug in 1956, there was found a bronze scabbard for a broadsword with bronze fittings. And as for special fittings for a steed in antiquity, ornamentation in bronze was found in a series of excavated graves of steeds: the reins as much as other parts were hung with bronze, embellished with plates, all sorts of tin boxes, brooches, clever spirals and even bells and chimes (See Miss O. Navickas' "Equipment of a steed in the Veršviai Cemetary." From "The History of Lithuanian Culture," I, pages 83-93.).

While a practical spread, such as is really needed under the saddle, covers all visible "wings" of the saddle.



Figure 69. The Crest of the Lithuanian State, "A White Knight on a red background" (backed upon a bronze shield).

The Shield with the Doubled Cross

This symbol as such, first came out officially and at once became a part of history in 1386, shortly after Jogaila's wedding with Jadwiga. Upon his arrival in Cracow, Jogaila began to strike Polish denars, placing upon their obverse side the shield with the doubled cross, and above the shield--the letter "W," which represented "Vladislaus," that is, his Christian name. Soon thereafter, the doubled cross upon the shield was placed upon Jogaila's seal, attached to the Rider's left shoulder.⁸³ In 1393 Jogaila's Cracow "quarters" (larger coins) were issued with the same symbol. Having strengthened his position in Vilnius about 1395, Vytautas issued his own coins with that same symbol.

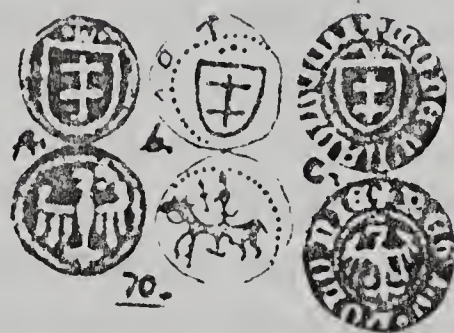


Figure 70. The shield with the doubled cross on Poland's and Lithuania's coins. a, c) Jogaila's. b) Vytautas'

Since the shield with the doubled cross first was presented on Polish (Jogaila's) coins instead of Queen Jadviga's crest, Dr. Głomowski in analyzing these coins, reached the conclusion that this new symbol had to be recognized in Poland as King Vladislav's (Jogaila's) family crest. And there is no room for doubt: Jogaila could not live in Poland without his own crest. In addition, all known sources indicated that

⁸³ See page 218, Figure 65/9, 10. Not only on the seals, but also on Jogaila's manor ensigns, that same doubled cross glittered, as is confirmed by heraldist Niesieckis, in his "Herbarz Polski," I, 550.

Jogaila, himself held it to be his own crest. In other words, the shield with doubled cross could not have appeared on Poland's coins in place of Jadviga's Angevin crest, otherwise. After Jogaila's death, the designated symbol remained further as the unquestioned crest of that house, at first used alone (e.g. on Casimier's, son of Jogaila Polish coins) afterwards with the Knight's symbol, as much with the Jagellons--Polish/Lithuanian Grand Dukes, as well as those of other rulers of different blood lines, of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom, who acquired all august rights on the political estate of Jogaila. With the end of the Jagiellon blood line in the united kingdom, the symbol of the originator of the dynasty continued to appear only in the Vytis' crest, and there it reigned as an indivisible part of the highest national symbol of the Lithuanians.

Let us say that the shield with the doubled cross is a Lithuanian symbol. Jogaila took it along to Poland out of the Fatherland--there is no argument about that. That is admitted even by the Poles. But how and when did it originate? Our historians state that long before Jogaila's wedlock there were in Lithuanian distinct marks of that kind, in combinations of geometric lines and figures. They were adopted by dukes and other eminent persons. The doubled cross (no mention made of the shield) they allege, could have been, or was the symbol of the region of Vilnius. From this it would follow, as a suggestion, that Jogaila, leaving for Poland, would have appropriated the alleged "symbol of the Vilnius Province" to himself. Regretfully, this solution is impossible. If someone, let us say, had established the double cross in the Vilnius Province, then to Jogaila, the Grand Duke of all Lithuania, such a primitive symbol, and from only one province, would have been too minor. Jogaila was creating a family as the ruler of all Poland, and not just a provincial head. Beyond that, Jogaila's personal crest could not be an adaptation of one type or other, but must be a pure original, such as would be appropriate for his children and children's children, and represent the Jagiellon dynasty, and not some limited acreage, whose symbol could be duplicated by others and repeatedly cause a muddle.

So, Jogaila most certainly did not consider the appropriation of any "Vilnius Province symbol," even if such a symbol ever existed. However, we gravely doubt that it ever existed. Neither the double cross, nor, especially, such a cross upon a shield, has ever appeared in any ancient source before Jogaila's time. If it had been indeed, Vilnius' (or any other provinces') distinctive symbol, then would not it have been employed by earlier Lithuania's or any of her provinces' rulers? Gediminas, the very founder of Vilnius and undoubtedly the ruler of "Vilnius Province", originated and left the famous Columns of Gediminas. With them, the Grand Duke and Vilnius' merchants stamped their kapos. Algirdas,

Grand Duke, ruled "Vilnius Province" also, immortalized on his coins the "javelin head". And upon his known seal the edges of more spear points are combined, and nothing else, as a reminder of his symbol (see page 119, Figure 29/a). Kęstutis, having taken Vilnius away from Jogaila in 1391, equally did not anywhere express the doubled cross, as the alleged "Symbol of Vilnius Province," and left it nowhere. And so Jogaila also, being the Grand Duke of Lithuania, would have used it on his coins or elsewhere, if such a symbol had existed earlier, and had meant something in Lithuania.⁸⁴

And so, talk of a doubled cross as the "Symbol of Vilnius Province", allegedly having appeared in pre-Christian Lithuania, remains a very questionable guess, a murky hypothesis. How much these guesses hamper the truth, another example will amply demonstrate: here another old professor has written to the author, that the doubled cross occurred as pure happenstance, that the first painter of the shield, unable to portray what was under the shield, brought to the surface and daubed...the rider's hand passing between two cross thongs holding the shield.

For variety's sake, we may recall K. Bolsunovski's "version" of the doubled cross' descent. This investigator of good will has written an entire study about symbolic emblems⁸⁵ in which our symbol was not overlooked. According to that author, after the liberation of Jerusalem (11th century) monks inhabiting the Augustinian Monastery' hospital, organized a separate Congregation and named themselves St. John's Hospitaliers, went out to war not only against the foes of religion, but at the same time against the "invisible enemy" manifesting itself in people's illnesses--the devil....To signify their design to fight these two battles, the monks selected as their ensign the doubled cross. As if to continue this version, T. Narbutas relates (II, 413) that an affiliate of that monastery in 1227 was established in Dobrin of M_gsuria, but Lithuanians soon attacked it and destroyed it (only 5 monks remained alive). So, perhaps the pagan Lithuanians, having slain the monks, brought their foes' emblem home and began using it?....

There are also other reflections about the origin of the doubled cross. Regretfully, they do not help us. That cross on the shield is

⁸⁴The "small change" of Jogaila, appearing in Vilnius about 1384 contained: on one side the spear point with a cross. On the other: the Columns of Gediminas (See page 152). Of the alleged "Vilnius Province symbol"---not a sign!

⁸⁵"Znaki symboliczne," Warsaw, 1903.

important to us, but of that symbol from pre-Jogaila's time only the romanticists of the Aušra period mention it. Taking off, it seems, from Basanavičius, Dr. N.N. [Dr. No Name; actually, Karys is talking about Dr. Alexander M. Račkus] in his pseudo-scientific work, handed over to us "Mindaugas' seal" with runic lettering in whose center something very similar to our present Vytis is found, and of course with the doubled cross shouldered on the shield. As a matter of fact, that seal is from the 17th century and it belongs probably to Vladislaus Vasa. The inscription is undecipherable, but the crown about the Vytis and other parts of the general picture today do not raise any doubts of the date of that seal. As regards the "runic lettering," we have here an even greater misunderstanding. There has never been any "runic lettering" in Lithuania.

To strange "theories" must be added an entire series of attempts by Slavophiles (J. Tolstoy, Hutten-Czapski, etc.) to find the genesis of our doubled cross in the Eastern Slavic Orthodox church flag ("labarum") which Vladimir, son of Algirdas at one time struck on his Kiev coins. While Baron Taube attempted to interpret that flag's wickerwork-scene as coming from some manner of legendary Scandinavian "double knot" (lac d'amour)⁸⁶; however, the roots of the doubled cross went deeper and further....

Notwithstanding that the flag struck upon the coins of the son of Algirdas was as much similar to our doubled cross, as a four-legged table is to a four-legged mule, the aforesaid fancies of the Slavs tempted Prof. Jonynas. Here, finally, is the source of our doubled cross! That cross found its way upon the majestic seal of Jogaila not as that Polish ruler's family crest, but as a symbol of Kiev! (sic) So the honorable professor consoles himself with having found the "real answer." Further, he found it very easy to deduce the reason why Vytautas placed the doubled cross (without mentioning the shield) upon his Vilnius' coins. It seems by this gesture, Vytautas wanted to show that now (about 1395) he and not Jogaila, was the "most illustrious lord of that Grand Duchy" (that is, of Kiev, J.K.K.)⁸⁷....

Such reflections, clearly cannot convince us. First, the symbol struck on Kiev's coins by Vladimir, son of Algirdas, was no doubled cross, nor even similar to it, but a portrait, pure and simple, of the unfurled religious flag (see page 176, figure 54). If the doubled cross, such as it is, ever had been the heraldic symbol of the Kiev Duchy

⁸⁶"Zagadočnyj rodovoj znak semji Vladimira sviatovo," Sborn. Stat., Prague, 1929.

⁸⁷"Vairas," No. 6, 1930.

(which it never was), then it would never have prevailed over Queen Jadviga's crest upon Polish coins (even more--upon the majestic seal). Let us place the portraits together:

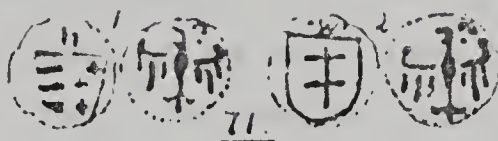


FIGURE 71. The Polish denar: 1) With Jadviga's crest; 2) with Jogaila's crest.

Who, being on the correct road, could even think that the new "majestic king of Poland" (in those days of idolizing of crests) would substituted the Queen's old crest upon coins with some kind of crest from a subject province? A clear heresy. In Poland, where the traditions of the boyars and the significance of a crest was of first importance to the mighty, where only blood could wash away the slightest injury to one's crest, the replacement of a loftier ensign by a meaner one could only come about by brutal force. But Jogaila won the royal throne of Poland not by a bloody struggle, but by the most subtle invasion---a marriage with, until then, a lady higher than he in position. So, the erstwhile crest of Jadviga could only be replaced and supplanted in public by a crest equal to it--Jogaila's own.⁸⁸

We will not mention any more unfounded tales about this emblem. Clear indications and remaining memorials show, that it was Jogaila's. Our new generation of historians are of the same opinion, who have given this question more of their attention. There remains to be explained when and why the doubled cross found its way upon the shield, how and why it was adopted.

⁸⁸ We are discussing of course, the family crests of Jadviga and Jogaila, the heraldic family symbols. The official Polish crest was and continues to remain for all time the old Piast Eagle, finally coming to be called "Bialym Oriem"--the White Eagle. It is so called in Poland and among Poles today.

At the end of the second half of the 14th century, the Polish state found itself as in the edge of a precipice. After the death of Casimier III' there was no heir to the king's throne. The crown of Poland passed to the son of the sister of Casimier, Louis, king of Hungary. Poland thus came into a personal union with King Louis. Louis died in 1392, similarly leaving no son. Disorder ensued. Both Louis' daughters, Maria and Jadwiga, still in childhood, were betrothed to German princes---the first to Sigismund of Luxenburgh (son of Emperor Charles IV); Jadwiga, to William of Hapsburg. The Poles disliked such ties to Germans. The Polish nobles conceded the throne to Jadwiga, but with the stipulation, that not she herself, but they would select for her an appropriate consort. After many discussions, they arrived at Jogaila, at that time the Grand Duke of Lithuania. That would be, they decided, the best wedding, since Lithuania was large, powerful and occupied a strategically important position in the east of Europe, from whence the Poles felt a never ending danger. Joining in one way or other, of Poland and Lithuania in a union, the peril from the east would subside, and the Teutonic Knights would be more easily curbed, who at that time were tearing province after province from its western territory.

So, in the period 1384-5, with Jadwiga, barely a dozen year old girl, brought from Hungary to Cracow and crowned "queen" of Poland, match-making delegations were created in Cracow and Vilnius. Debates were heated, with poor Jadwiga consulted not at all. Finally in 1385, the well-known act was consummated, whereby Jogaila (whose motives we will not touch upon) fishing for Jadwiga's hand and Poland's crown, agreed to have himself baptized, baptized all of Lithuania, join his Grand Duchy with Poland, and perform other duties necessary for both nations.

The marriage neared. It was in Jogaila's pagan manor, into which at that time all manner of advisors began to crowd from Christian Poland that naturally the problem of a crest was brought up. In the tradition of those days, Jogaila could not make an appearance in Poland without his family crest, as we have said. But what kind of his "own" emblem could he bring? The spearhead, which his father Algirdas immortalized upon his coins, was regarded as a general symbol of ancient Lithuanians. The Vytis, at that time it was the unchallenged symbol of the uncle, Kęstutis and cousin Vytautas. The Columns of Gediminas, his grandfather Gediminas'. though it would suit a grandson occupying the throne in Vilnius, but having been used on the coins of the Trakai Grand Duke, it became not only the throne's heir, but also the general crest of all heirs of Gediminas. Clearly there was a need for another and entirely new specialized sign

which would be a splendid crest of Jogaila's alone. Since he had never given this matter any thought, so far as is known, it became necessary to do so at once.

It is no secret that in the old manors of Christian kings, high level clergy swarmed all over. They had an unusual influence in Poland itself. Preparing for the Jogaila-Jadwiga wedding, the clergy from the regal manor of Poland gathered about Jogaila. (Jadwiga's chaplain, Fr. A. Vasilas with a group of assistants, prepared Jogaila for baptism). As our Grand Duke, about to marry a Pole, prepared to convert Lithuania, truly the thought had to rise in the minds of the priests round about him that here, two nations, marked with the same cross of Christ, will be joined together, and Jogaila himself will stride into history as an unusual "missionary," actually the "father of his people," leading his country into the great sheepfold of the Saviour...The clergy, well acquainted with Church history, and beyond that, fawning upon their future ruler, undoubtedly would have considered and expressed the thought that Jogaila by this noble deed would be likened to Biblical Abraham, as a patriarch.⁸⁹ And to such a person, in Catholic heraldry it would be seemly to award not just a cross, but a cross with two transverse sections. No one can know all the details, but it seems that the opinion was reached that the pith of Jogaila's crest must be a doubled cross. See, such a cross would vividly display the jointure of two Christian nations. It would conform to church regulations---a doubled cross has been used by metropolitans and patriarchs from of old, and from the 12th century it has always been accorded to them.⁹⁰ Jogaila's exceptional position deserved it, and it would be recognized in the highest places.

Concerning the political motives behind the Jogaila-Jadwiga marriage the Poles, we can understand, had reason to comment on them the least. As we guess, it was emphasized that by this grand historic move, Jogaila became not only the apostle of Christ's church in Lithuania, but at the same time the responsible head of a weakened Poland, its leader, guardian religious protector and supporter, in a word, a sort of "patriarch." Who then, would better deserve this cross, most like a patriarchal cross. Such a cross, as a GODLY

⁸⁹The Catholic Encyclopedia XI, 1913, page 549.

⁹⁰The Catholic Encyclopedia, IV, page 533. The so called Papal Cross has three cross pieces. All additional crosspieces to the real cross are considered only heraldic entities. It was only a heraldic cross that was sought for Jogaila.

ENSIGN, in 1386, the newly baptised Jogaila accepted for himself, as Senator K. Strončinski contends, who had a better opportunity to view the oldest sources in Cracow, than anyone else.⁹¹ Dr. Piekosinski is of the same opinion. While the eminent European heraldist J. Siebmacher without any hesitation calls the doubled cross on the shield, which we find upon Jogaila's early Cracow coins, the family crest of Jogaila (Jagellonische Familienwapper).⁹²

However, we must here emphasize that the referred to core of Jogaila's crest was not a mere copy of the patriarch's cross. The upper cross-piece of the latter cross is normally shorter than the foundation (or lower) transverse section. In Jogaila's doubled cross, as we have seen in earlier versions are of equal length. Examining the crest of Jogaila, we gain the impression that the Polish clerics, actively participating in its construction, could have had in mind basically the ecclesiastical cross of Poland, through whose vertical staff was drawn another below the normal transverse piece, equal to the first, symbolizing the contribution of the new Christian nation. In some remaining antique pieces, where Jogaila's crest had been used not only in Poland, but also in Lithuania, because of the restriction of the shield toward its bottom, we often find the lower cross piece of the doubled cross shorter, rather than the opposite. So, Jogaila's doubled cross is merely similar to the patriarchal cross. But it was constructed independently, without direct adoption, especially since there was no ecclesiastical legalizing process. It was never a real patriarchal cross, as Jogaila was never a real patriarch.

Still, some Polish writers attempted to connect the referred to doubled cross to Jogaila's and Vytautas' "ecclesiastical titles." Allegedly, the Romas Pontiff, valuing their missionary activity, appointed them both "Apostolic Vicars" in Lithuania in 1418.⁹³ From this was drawn the "logical" conclusion that the doubled cross is truly of the nature of ecclesiastical heraldry (patriarchal) and came to Poland-Lithuania in connection with the mentioned "vicariates" of Jogaila and Vytautas.

Alas, this entire matter has been explained (and discussed even today) variously and unclearly. We concede that Vytautas and Jogaila have distinguished themselves for Catholicism... We equally do not doubt that Pope

⁹¹"Davne monety polskie," III, 58.

⁹²"Grosses u. Allgeneines Wappenbuch," I, 2d., page 2.

⁹³From Gumowski's "Numismat. litewska," page 53.

Martin V, having heard reports of the special delegates to the General Council of Constance, could have honored Jogaila and Vytautas as reformers of Lithuania, and so decorated them. However, 1) He did not appoint them "Apostolic Vicars," since only a person who has been ordained with tonsure, maintains celibacy and knows canon law can become a vicar in the full sense of that word,⁹⁴ and neither Jogaila nor Vytautas could fulfill these fundamental conditions; 2) Our historians describe this appointment of Jogaila and Vytautas differently: they were appointed by the Pope patrons of the Roman Church and of the Catholics in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, or "Apostolic Vicars in mundane affairs of all Lithuanian and Russian lands---in temporalibus" (the latest Lithuanian History calls them "general vicars," in certain of the eastern provinces of the Grand Duchy)⁹⁵ 3) These varying explanations show that the act of Pope Martin V has either not been seen by these expounders, or the act itself is not clearly understood, is ambiguous, is vague; 4) What is most important to us is that the doubled cross, having gained a strong place in Lithuanian heraldry, has nothing in common with "Papal appointments," since it appeared on Jogaila's coins and seal about 30 years earlier than "1418" (the year of the Papal honoring of Jogaila and Vytautas), while it was about twenty years before the General Council of Constance began that it appeared on Vytautas' coins.

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To complete the formation of the crest, Jogaila's doubled cross was encased in a shield, as was the custom in Poland, and as the tradition was in the west. The shield represented the entire extent of the lands and inhabitants ruled by the owner of the crest, its head and protector. The result was a perfectly beautiful heraldic symbol, original and full of meaning,

⁹⁴The Catholic Encyclopedia, XV, page 402.

Our earlier students were misled by an old fact: it seems they had in mind the crest of Hungary, which from the year 1000 of our era contained a real patriarchal cross, awarded by the Pope; this witnessed the appointment of the King of that year, an untonsured layman, as "Apostolic Vicar." In truth, that cross, granted for special merit of the ruler to the Church, simply added to the "regal majesty" another one "apostolic majesty." (See Siebmacher, I, 1 d.)

⁹⁵Compare A. Šapoka's Lithuanian History, page 143; Zenon Ivinskis' "The Path of Christianity in Lithuania," "Lithuania for Lithuanians" Vol. X, 4, 1959; page 113 and LPSR History, I, page 142 (Vilnius, 1957).

which Jogaila could exhibit without an excuse, not only in Cracow, but all over the west.

Though Jogaila carried this symbol and exhibited it elsewhere, it remained and continues to remain more personal to Lithuanians than it was to Poles. For no matter how we evaluate Jogaila's marriage he still was and continues to be our nation's illustrious son, a Lithuanian. We cannot eye him as a renegade from his native land. He loved Lithuania equally as well as did Vytautas, and toiled for its well being, but by separate means, weighing all matters in a somewhat different way. Jogaila did not barter his Lithuanian spirit to the Poles. Even Dlugosa emphasizes that Jogaila loved Lithuania more than he did Poland. Moreover, we can assume he did not trust the Poles overly, since during all his stay in Poland, he surrounded himself with watches of Lithuanian soldiers....

With respect to the elements of Jogaila's ensign, the shield is no more international than it is Lithuanian. The same or a very similar shield was used by Lithuanian soldiers from ages past. And one-half of the doubled cross shining of that crest undoubtedly symbolized the baptized Lithuanian nation. For this reason, it is not difficult to understand why Vytautas, gaining control of the Lithuanian throne, struck that same crest on his own coins (See page 163). Who could call this act of Vytautas uncalled for? Why, not only Jogaila, but Vytautas cooperated in the baptism of Lithuania, Vytautas, who earlier was baptized by the Teutonic Knights, so--he was an "earlier" Christian than Jogaila. That is to say, both its rulers led and shepherded the Lithuanian nation to the cross of Christ: the son of former Grand Duke Algirdas, and the son of the former Grand Duke Kęstutis, contestants for the Lithuanian throne, one after the other having occupied that same throne. Even more: while Jogaila remained in Poland, Vytautas continued strengthening Catholicism in Lithuania with the greatest success. He erected churches, endowed them with large benefices, protected the pioneer missionaries, supported in every way the first bishop of Vilnius, Andrew Vasilas in his difficult duties... Finally, not only with Jogaila's consent, but especially with Vytautas' also, (consensu Vladislai et Alexandri, dominorum Lituanorum), Jacob Plichta, O.M. was selected and enthroned as the second bishop⁹⁶ of Vilnius, in 1398.

Therefore, Vytautas possessed the unquestioned right to half of the doubled cross inscribed upon Jogaila's crest, symbolizing two "nations becoming related," and protected from all danger by the shield carrying the same

⁹⁶V. Gidžiūnas: "De Fratribus Minoribus in Lithuania," page 72, 76, and elsewhere.

cross⁹⁷. It is completely without foundation and assumed without reason that Vytautas placed Jogaila's crest upon his own coins, allegedly as a sign of peace with Jogaila, or motivated by some type of recognition of Jogaila's superiority. History is full of the clearest data that Vytautas never considered himself Jogaila's "vassal," and the peace between them was concluded at Jogaila's initiative. Having occupied the throne of Vilnius, Vytautas immediately felt at home and began to act with complete independence, emphasized when he began to designate himself the Grand Duke of Lithuania (though at the time, this name belonged legally to Jogaila.)

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When Jogaila attached to his seal the shield with the doubled cross, upon the Lithuanian Knight, this crest of his became even more Lithuanian. And with the Knight-Rider he returned to his fatherland for ages, from whence he had temporarily departed to serve strangers. There is no evidence that the Poles ever used the crest of Jogaila as their own national symbol, appropriated it, or in any way felt its absence. On the other hand, after it first flashed upon Vytautas' coins in Lithuania, it long remained on its ruler's seals and coins. Together with the Vytis, over a long series of centuries, it inserted its roots so deeply that it became unquestionably our own. Who could today imagine our Vytis without that addition of Jogaila's?

It is understandable that the doubled cross upon the shield with the Knight's crest is considered part of another symbol. Separately, it becomes an entirely different sign having, as we have seen, its own history and a full heraldic meaning. Preparing it for one kind of exhibit or another, particular care must be taken that the shield is properly outlined (we have already discussed that), and both transverse pieces of the cross must be equal. Applying color, the background of the shield is painted red, the cross and the shield's border, bronze. There is no reason to prevent where necessary, the use of the double cross without the shield. But one must not forget that parts of the entire heraldic symbol thus dismembered are no longer national signs. They automatically descend to historical-national ornamentation.

⁹⁷ According to Vijukas Kojalavičius, the shield for the doubled cross was red; the cross, according to Niesiecki, was "golden," And so this crest was colored on Jogaila's flag. However, with the Knights' symbol removed, that shield became white. (See, THE KNIGHT, page 202)

During the days of the Lithuanian Republic, the shield with the doubled cross, and equally the cross alone, became new symbols in the life of the nation. There, the Riflemen Association (Šaulių Sąjunga) selected and legalized the latter symbol as its specific sign (how appropriate that selection was--we shall discuss later; the historic shield has been distorted). The doubled cross without the shield, during the fight for freedom (1919) was adopted as the foundation of the military order, "FOR THE FATHERLAND;" from that foundation, there was developed later the ORDER OF THE CROSS OF VYTIS," separated into classes and degrees.

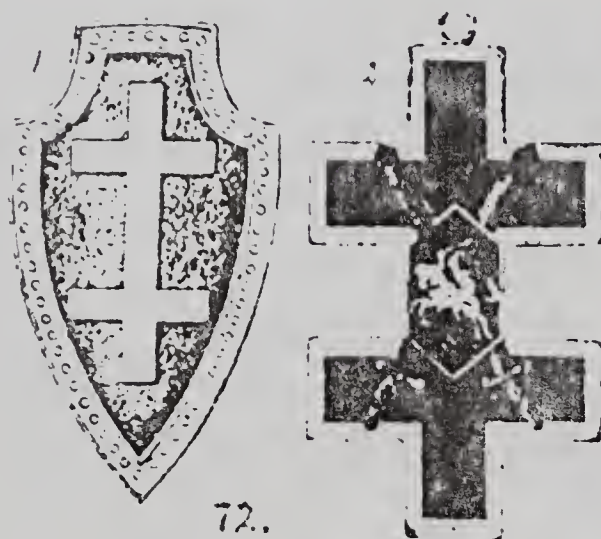


Figure 72. 1. Lithuanian Riflemen's Association symbol.
2. The Cross of Vytis.

"The Fatherland is in danger--
The Storm Comes from the South..."

1. A Few Introductory Notes

The end of the 15th century up to the beginning of the 18th century marks an exceptional epoch in Lithuanian numismatics. From Alexander to Augustus II (The Saxon), through more than two hundred years, many and extremely varied coins of the Grand Duchy were struck. A large quantity of them came from the silver and gold mint in Lithuania's capital of Vilnius, with a comparatively small number struck elsewhere.

As in earlier years, so also in this epoch the basic metal for the production of coins consistently remained silver. True, alongside silver, there now appeared an entire series of dazzling gold coins. Copperpieces were also produced, but the silver (higher or lower grades) coins convincingly smothered all others.

Upon nearly all the coins we find easily readable legends and inscriptions. All inscriptions follow purely western standards. The initials of the ruler's name, as well as complete or abbreviated words, are expressed in Latin. Beginning with the coins of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Sigismundus (the Old), the date of striking was placed on them, while with the reign of Sigismundus Augustus there began to appear the portraits of the Grand Dukes. So, in the sphere of coin production, two definite changes were observable: first, the "Westernization" of coins, and second: modernizing techniques, leaving far behind our medieval methods.

Lithuanian coins of this epoch have been collected (and are still found) rather plentifully. They are to be found often in many civilized countries, as well with private collectors of antiquities, as with museums,¹ and even with such numismatic dealers who trade in items of currency. In Russia and in Poland prior to the first World War, there were collected and turned over to science several really large collections of our coins, some of which were even considered to be complete sets.² Based upon these collections and supported by old documents, the numismatic students

¹In New York, the American Numismatic Society's Museum contains a very attractive set of coins from this particular period in Lithuania.

2. So far as a "full set" is concerned, we doubt it very much. Since accurate statistics were never kept at that time, who could confirm without a doubt that those historical coins remaining to date were all that were struck?...

of the 19th and 20th centuries composed several monographs including in the same documents pictures of both sides of the coins located. The ardent Polish numismatist Dr. Gumowski has probably been the most prolific laborer in this field. While investigating the historical Polish coins, he collected data concerning Lithuanian items, for in this epoch, because of the Union and other reasons, Poland's and Lithuania's money, as well as other matters, were connected in one way or another. In a scrupulously written volume on the Vilnius Coin Mint (Mennica Wilenska), Dr. Gumowski described all known up to 1921 15th to 18th century coins of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy.

We utilize the afore named Marion Gumowski's work as something of a textbook. However, that alone would not have sufficed by far. By examining the list of literature and sources, the reader may readily imagine how many short and long works it has been necessary to consult, seeking more accurate data, facts, dates, amounts, etc., that this volume would be sufficiently complete and clear. In addition to documents, as many as it was possible to find, we spared no pains in handling and examining (wherever it was possible) the old coins themselves, which in many cases assisted us in disentangling obscure items involved, or avoiding errors.

At this point we must emphasize several matters affecting not only Part III, but also Part II. of this book, as follows:

- 1) The obverse and reverse sides of coins discussed had to be determined and adjusted in the illustrations not according to "dogmas" set by foreign writers. We have found basic errors in this field, which we fittingly adjusted.
- 2) The illustrations, which many of the elder generation of numismatists affixed to plates and placed at the end of their study, we have deliberately spread throughout the text, where the pictured coins were being discussed. This helps the reader to follow and understand.
- 3) Those pictures of coins are reproduced in actual size, unless specified otherwise. However, because of technical difficulties of printing, a small change in size could have inadvertently crept in.
- 4) The rotation difference between the obverse and reverse positions of coins of the Grand Duchy were not controlled or consistent, so in the illustrations in this book will show both sides upright.
- 5) We occasionally hear the opinion that after the Union with Poland, all coins struck in the Grand Duchy were "Polish coins." This has no foundation, for up until 1707, Lithuania had its own monies, and Poland, its own. That fact was marked on the coins themselves: "A COIN OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA," and "A COIN OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND." [Some coins had both. In the U.S. Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. as part of the J.K. Lilly collection there is on exhibit a mis-labeled Lithuanian gold 10 Ducat of Sigismundus III (and other gold Lithuanian coins) which states: "POLAND. 10 Ducats, 1616. Struck for Lithuania." Due to the heavy Polish influence upon numismatists, Lithuania is even mis-represented in the national U.S. museum! This supplemented/typist has written the curator of the numis-

2. The "Small Change" of Alexander, the Half-Grašis and Grašis.

With the death of Vytautas, the small coin smithy of Vilnius suspended operations and of course, crumbled. A year passed, then ten, while the pretenders to the throne of Vilnius rangled among themselves, with no attention being given to the striking of coins. Švitrigaila, who became Grand Duke of Lithuania after the death of Vytautas, desired the crown which had been promised to Vytautas. The Poles were enraged. A struggle ensued for Padolė. Švitrigaila was unsuccessful--after a few years, Lithuanian leaders themselves relieved him of his post, and placed Sigismundus, son of Kęstutis in his stead. Švitrigaila fled to the eastern region of the Grand Duchy and occupied Kiev. Two fronts faced Sigismundus: the forces of Švitrigaila, and the Poles, who earlier had supported him, but after noting his efforts to make Lithuania autonomous as it was in the time of Vytautas, ranted against him and with the aid of some of Lithuania's leaders, deposed him. (In 1440 he was murdered by stealth).

In 1440 Lithuanians placed the coronet of the Grand Duchy upon the 13 year old son of Jogaila, Casimier. After seven years passed, that same youth was elected king of Poland by the Poles. Increasing the power of his position in both Lithuania and Poland, Casimier found no time to busy himself with Lithuanian monies. And so during the length of his reign (1440-92) not one single Lithuanian coin is known.

The personal rule of Casimier over Poland and Lithuania did not please our people. The boyars had always demanded a separate ruler for Lithuania, as it had been until then. Relations between the two countries became tense. It thus seems that to ease that tension, Casimir sent his son Alexander from Cracow in 1490. Though this Duke brought no particular title, he was welcomed by Lithuanians with high esteem as son of the king. Of course he soon reached the very heights of the state's life.³ And upon the death of his father Casimir in 1492, the lords of Lithuania immediately convened a congress and elected Alexander Grand Duke of Lithuania. The crown of Poland fell to another son of Casimir, John Albertas. It seemed for a while that the two states would separate. Regretfully, after a

³ In the same year in which he arrived in Lithuania, in a letter he directed to Połock, Alexander boldly called himself the Duke of Lithuania.

matic section of that museum concerning this, and received no reply. The coin in question was not a Polish coin, but a Lithuanian gold 10 ducat, struck BY Lithuanians, IN Lithuania (at the Vilnius mint), and FOR Lithuania. The coin should be definitely be labeled under Lithuania, not Poland. In the same Smithsonian Museum there is also in the famous DuPont collection, a Lithuanian silver bar of the 12-13th century, listed under "Russia"... Again, the curator of the numismatic section of the Smithsonian museum did not care to reply to this writers complaint.]

reign of nine years, John Albertas died and his crown was given to Alexander by the Poles.

Acting as the "legate" of Casimir to Lithuania, Alexander lost no time in organizing the country's money. He established a new coin mint in Vilnius and began to strike his own coins. The very first of these quickly became known as "small change" or "little denars," and appeared while the father of Alexander, Casimier, still lived. Such haste is confirmed by this fact: some of Alexander's small change are found with the letter "A," and others, are entirely anonymous. The latter undoubtedly belong to the period when Alexander was in Lithuania with no specific title (1490-92), while those with the letter "A" were struck after his election as Grand Duke of Lithuania.

[•]



FIGURE 73. Alexander's "small change" [pinigėliai]. 1 & 2 "anonymous;" 3-4 bearing the initial of his name.

On one side of these coins there is pictured the Vytis, on the other side, the Polish eagle. Such combining of the crests of both states on the same coins of the Grand Duchy is the first example of this type of "memorial" from the era of pairing Lithuania-Poland. Jogaila's grandson thus honored his forefathers land, but could not refrain from honoring that land where his grandfather and father ruled, where he was born, and was himself reared...The pairing by Alexander of the crests of Poland and Lithuania soon became traditional and was continued afterward, until by degrees the Vytis and the Eagle became jointly some sort of unique crest. In later years, that joint crest was pictured upon coins, hung up on walls, and was drawn in the niches of manors of the nobility. Understandably, the Knight was thrust to the left, which in heraldry meant second place.

[•] Some of the illustrations of coins did not reproduce as clearly as they should have. This supplementer has therefore added drawings of coins to the text, and placed them with the illustrations Karys has provided. The added illustrations are enclosed by a bracket []. Line drawings taken from the Polish Numismatic and Archaeological Society's KATALOG Vol. III, by Edmund Kopicki (Warsaw, 1976).

The minor "small change" of Alexander were put in circulation at 1/10 of the grašis, as the original Lithuanian denars were valued earlier. However, they turned out to be much inferior to the well-known denars of both Jogaila and Vytautas: they weighed about 0.345 gr. each, with the silver content an average of barely 0.085 gr.⁴ True, even the Prague grosh, upon which the reckoning of money in Lithuania was based, fell somewhat, but its real value was larger than ten new coins of Alexander. Confusion reigned. People refused to accept the new small change on a par with those of better grade. They demanded up to 14 of them for a grašis. Instead of "denars," they were ironically termed "petty denars" (in Polish: "denarki").

Alexander clearly saw the source of easy money in the emission of coins, so he adopted a series of measures to maintain that source. Noting the unpopularity of his coins among the people, he appointed specialized officials to monitor the "small change" rate. Those officials, known in Vytautas' time as magistrates of small claims, were commissioned to accustom the people to the spread of the new coins at their designated rate of exchange. That is to say, it was almost as if force was used to compel the circulation in the country of new coins, inferior to those used earlier. Attempting to squeeze the most possible benefit from the mint, Alexander gave it his special attention. The mintmasters were selected from noble and reliable families (for example, from 1495-99, Marshal Kreptavičius headed the Vilnius mint; later until 1506, Prince M. Gliniskis)⁵. There was a prohibition issued soon against exporting silver, so that there would be no shortage for coinage.⁶ There is data that Alexander's coin emission (including here the half-grašis also) brought him an average annual net income of about 5,650 of three-score grašiai.

⁴ All weights and silver contents of coins discussed in this section are combined in one table. See Page 362.

⁵ Notwithstanding this, as it appeared later, in 5 years, about 400,000 grašiai disappeared without a trace. Obviously, the nobles selected by Alexander desired to enrich themselves no less than he.

⁶ On one occasion, a certain Mozaishk merchant named Jakushas, was arrested exporting a large amount of silver from Lithuania, which Alexander's officials confiscated immediately. Even the protest of the ruler of Moscow failed to help the victim. Alexander retorted that this prohibition was well known to merchants. Truly, Alexander "snuggled" to silverⁱⁿ quite equivocal relations with Jews, exiling some from Lithuania, and later readmitting them. For example, after being banished in 1495, Abraham Jezofovičius returned and became distinguished so much for his material aid to Alexander, that he became his permanent banker.

⁷ The unification of Poland's and Lithuania's coins became factual only after the Lublin union. We will discuss that later.

After the death of Poland's King John Albert, at the election congress of Petrakov in 1500, among other subjects, there were considered the problems of joint Polish-Lithuanian coinage. The lords of both countries agreed that it was fitting to establish a common coin, of the same weight and par value basic to both countries, though struck each with its own crest as of old. As it seems, Alexander was not a party to such reforms, and no changes along those lines were made at the Vilnius mint. The Poles raged. Of course, even the most rabid chauvinists of Cracow at that time did not dream that these two nationals, already so closely "connected," would reasonably consider a common currency. Fundamentally, they were angered and agitated by this recurrent fact, that Lithuanian coins were still about 1/5 superior than their Polish counterparts, and Lithuanians refused to accept Polish coins on a par with their own.⁷ But it was not possible for Alexander to further depreciate his already well "thinned out" coins, though it was at this that the Poles were taking aim.

* * *



Figure 74. Alexander's Half-grašis'

In addition to the plethora of "small change," Alexander struck not a few half-grašis in Vilnius, of somewhat higher silver content. A half grašis weighed on an average of 1.195 grams. In a single coin we find about 0.450 grams of silver content. In circulation, it equalled five "small change" pieces. As he had begun in his "small change," Alexander continued to join the Knight [Vytis] and the Eagle in his half-grašis pieces.

The half-grašis pieces contained clear inscriptions; they seem to have been originally struck several years after the "small change." The inscriptions were in Latin. On the obverse we read: "MONETA ALEXANDRI." On the reverse: "MAGNI DUCIS LITUANIE," which rephrased in Lithuanian means, "This coin belongs to the Grand Duke of Lithuania." Which is absolutism! It was not the Grand Duchy's, but the Grand Duke's as was done in many places elsewhere. As Louis XIV of France said, "The state--It is I"...

The style of the inscription reminds one of the Gothic. It must be that the minters were from Prussia. In later issues of the half-grašis coins, a step-by-step advance towards the Renaissance can be discerned. Following an old tradition, they did not fail to place a cross on the coins. According to recovered notations, the half-grašis coins could not have appeared before 1492, and the inscriptions prove that Alexander began to strike these coins after his election as Grand Duke of Lithuania. There were so many half-grašis coins in circulation that it is believed they were struck at Vilnius even after the time that Alexander accepted his crown as king of Poland.

When the "small change" and half-grašis coins of Alexander had taken root in Lithuania, a significant monetary event automatically took place here: the national Lithuanian monies quickly shook off their dependence upon the Prague groshes, and founded their own financial unit: the Lithuanian Grašis. Toward the end of Alexander's reign, practically all large financial transactions were computed no longer in Prague denominations, as heretofore, but in Lithuanian grašiai (at 10 "small change" pieces, or two half-grašiai), larger transactions were grouped into the threescore unit (60 grašiai). Though there was yet no local coin equal to the grašis, in Lithuania, efforts made by Alexander to establish his own money in Lithuania eliminated from circulation the Prague grosh, and it never again assumed that position.

In striking and circulating his coins, Alexander did not yield to the Poles. As earlier, Alexander's coins continued to roll from the Vilnius mint in the same real value, rated about 20% higher than the Polish denars and half-groshes. Upon demand, the Poles had to pay 5 of their half groshes for 4 of the Lithuanian. With respect to their denars, it was even worse ---for the Polish denar contained only 0.053 grams of silver. It is characteristic that, even though he was seated on the Polish throne,

Alexander did not allow his Polish "svitai" to talk him into reducing the par value of his Lithuanian coins to coincide with Polish coins. Such firm protection of Lithuanian currency helped the land's economic stability to be secured, and assured the people's confidence in the new coins.

* * *

In the middle of the past century, somewhere near Hannover Germany, there appeared a large silver coin, whose inscription showed immediately that it was Lithuanian, and appertained to the era of Alexander. After examining it, Professor Piekosinski found that the coin weighed 3.100 grsm., with a silver content of about 1.160 gr. Judging from the locale of the discovery within the sequence of Lithuanian coins of the era, earlier numismatists held it to be a Lithuanian grašis of Alexander. However, this coin weighs more than two of that ruler's half-grašiai, while there was enough pure metal in it to make three half-grašiai. It thus seems that such a grašis would not fit into Alexander's "system" of Lithuanian monies.



Figure 75. The alleged Grašis of Alexander.

Carefully examining both sides of this coin and its inscriptions, we see an entire series of new features. The first to strike the eye is the strange 4-field seal, with eagles and crowns, situated in the place normally used for the Polish eagle. Further, the inscriptions: on one side "ALEXANDER D G R POLONIE" (Alexander, by the grace of God, King of Poland); on the other "MON NO MAGNI DUC LITUANIA" (A new coin of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). Strange and at the same time untrue, since on a coin destined for Lithuania

there should not be noted that Alexander King of Poland, was at the same time the Grand Duke of Lithuania. The latter legal title of Alexander was indisputably clear, so its omission from the coin was an unpardonable error, made most probably without the specific concurrence of the ruler. Such an error could only have evolved from the originator of the project, who would also be liable for the contrived 4-field seal already mentioned. We cannot likewise see the specific desire of Alexander in the other inscription, containing such "democracy"--as that of the "Grand Duchy," rather than the "Grand Duke." Such a coin would have been too early for Lithuania. If Alexander, while still Grand Duke of Lithuania, felt himself to be the absolute ruler of the State and struck his half-grašis coins not in the name of the Grand Duchy, but in the name of the Grand Duke, it is inconceivable that he became "more democratic" after he assumed the crown of Poland....We further miss the cross which was on all half-grašis coins, the Catholic Alexander could not have consciously omitted it.

The finding under discussion shows that Alexander intended to create and issue for Lithuania a complete grašis coin, but that intention bore no fruit. Other than this one, there have been no other 1 grašis coins found. The causes of this failure could be several, but basically, we must conclude that it was a lack of time. As we have seen, Alexander attempted to issue a grašis while reigning as king in Poland. He remained there for about 5 years and died in 1506. It is quite clear that the war with Moscow and incursions of the Tatars into the lands of Lithuania during several of the earlier years of that period distracted the attention of Alexander from the need for coins in Lithuania. Obviously then, it was only in his latter years that he could advert to the Lithuanian grašis but after receiving this disastrous trial piece, he had no time to order another. So this error-filled and rejected piece was returned to where it was found. Obviously, the minter who offered it took it with him to Germany or else he prepared one or two more in his factory.⁸

* * *

⁸ Not because of errors, but for other causes, a similar fate befell the new type 2 litai piece of Independent Lithuania: in 1938, there were prepared dies for its striking. Several trial pieces were struck in copper and silver, but the coin itself did not leave the Mint (the second W.W. prevented it). Concerning this coin however, it will not be necessary to guess in the future, since its fate has been described and published (see this author's "Independent Lithuanian Money," Page 205, 209).

There are no firm statistics on the number of "small change" and half-grašis coins Alexander issued for circulation. Gumowski believes that through the entire period there could have been struck in Vilnius the sum of about 18 million grašiai of both coins.⁹ This total may be somewhat excessive but there is no way to check it. We can only say that the Vilnius mint, starting slowly, soon began to speed up, and gave its sovereign more and more income yearly. It did not stop even with the death of Alexander, until his successor, Sigismund the Elder, changed its operations his way.

3. COINS OF SIGISMUND THE ELDER (1506-1548)

Just like John Albert, Alexander also died without issue, so that there were no direct descendants to assume his crown. With the death of John, the first brother Alexander (Grand Duke of Lithuania) occupied the Polish throne. When he departed this world, the throne of both states went to the third brother Sigismundus, known to history as the Elder. He lived in Silicia, governing small dukedoms. After the funeral of Alexander, he hurried to Lithuania and soon was declared Grand Duke here. The Poles for their part elected him King of Poland also.

After attending to political matters, Sigismund without delay ordered an accounting of income from the Treasurer of the Lithuanian Dukedom, first of all directing his special attention to the still functioning coin mint of Vilnius. By December 1506, Duke M. Glinskis, at that time the supervisor and head of the mint, met with the new ruler in Gardinas, and both began examining the books of that profitable institution. At the conclusion, Sigismundus ordered the mint to "temporarily" close down, and having thanked Glinskis, dismissed him.¹⁰

⁹Mennica Wylenska, page 10.

¹⁰This fact probably more than anything else occasioned the insurrection staged by Glinskis the following year against Sigismundus, and in seeking assistance, found himself in Moscow.

After two years, blows were again heard at the Vilnius Mint, and now Sigismundus' half grašis coins were spewed out, the very first bearing the date "1508."¹¹ And Sigismundus loved money, but was prevented from starting earlier by two gigantic duties facing him, and later, by an incursion from Moscow (1507-8) instigated by that same Gliniskis--Vosylius III led his army out to free his "persecuted orthodox..."¹²

During this engagement with the Russians, a myriad of Polish coins appeared in Lithuania. You see, Polish leaders dragging entire wagonloads of assistance to Lithuania, had to cross Lithuanian territory, and everywhere requisitioned food and feed from the people. Lacking Lithuanian money, they paid (if they did pay) with their own. We have already mentioned that Polish money (coins) were substantially inferior to their Lithuanian counterparts, so everywhere those same disputes broke out: the Lithuanians demanded a higher price for their produce than the Polish equivalents, while the Poles were reluctant to acknowledge that their money was inferior to that of the "chams" (peasants). Lithuanians were in the right, as even Polish authors now concede. As a matter of fact, from the time of John Albert, the Polish denar contained 0.053 gr. of silver; in the denar (small change) of Alexander, there was 0.085 gr of silver. In the half grosh of the Poles there was only 0.385 grams, while in Alexander's Lithuanian half-grašis, 0.445 gr. In addition, that confusion was further confounded by the difference between the basic units of Polish and Lithuanian coins, the Grosh, and the Grašis. The Poles computed 18 denars to their grosh, while the Lithuanian Grašis remained steady at 10 denars ("small change.").

Even Sigismundus found no way to equalize the money units of both countries. However, something had to be done in this regard. Polish military, various missionaries, travelers, or merchants, to all of whom the borders of Lithuania were open, could not operate without purchasing upon arrival here some necessary item or other. On the other hand, to exchange their coins for Lithuanian money at the border in advance was impossible. The problem was raised at the Novgorod Congress. After consideration there by the nobles, Sigismundus issued a statute regulating the exchange of Polish and Lithuanian

¹¹ Any of his coins lacking the date of emission (supposedly, some of an earlier issue) are considered by numismatists to be either counterfeit, or erroneously pictured by the early students (the date inscription could have worn off by circulation).

¹² As often happens to those abandoning their country, Duke Gliniskis lost all his wealth in Lithuania, and plotting against his country with the Russians, somehow incurred their enmity. He was thrown into jail in Moscow in 1524 and died there of starvation.

money, basically establishing that the Polish half-grosh in Lithuania would be worth 4 Lithuanian denars, that is, lower by a fifth than the Lithuanian half-grašis. For example, if for a certain item, the charge was 4 Lithuanian denars, the Poles would pay five denars in their coin. But by the same statute, Sigismundus took another very important step: he decreed Polish money to be legal tender in Lithuania. No one could refuse to accept it at the prevailing rate. And so that these foreign coins would not remain here, they were accepted in payment of all duties to the Treasury of the Grand Duchy, from whence they again returned to Poland, at the regal disposition of that same Sigismundus.

If Sigismundus failed to find a means for unifying the money of both his states, it does not mean that he did not seek it, or shrank from it. The incessant whispers of his Polish advisors in Cracow weighed on him and compelled him to consider it. He was not adverse to the idea, as he himself mentioned in a letter to the Bishop of Varmia before reopening the Vilnius mint. However, that idea was not destined to be realized: Lithuanians entreated Sigismundus to retain the system left by Alexander, and so at the end of 1508, when he determined to strike Lithuanian half-grašiai at Vilnius, in all respects they turned out to be similar to Alexander's half-grašiai.

This time, when the Lithuanian coin mint began its work in Vilnius, it continued without pause until 1529, exclusively striking half-grašiai, at the time the most popular coin in the realm.



Figure 76. The Lithuanian half-grašis of Sigismundus the Elder.

variances were not under sufficient control. We are operating with averages computed in different ways, and must be satisfied with them.

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The administration of the mint in practice earlier, by appointed officials, was changed during the reign of Sigismundus the Elder, into "commercial" use---The Vilnius mint was leased out. The first lessee on record was a wealthy runaway Jew of Kiev, baptised Abraham Jesofovičius (Ezofovič) who had considerable influence even in Alexander's estate, and had loaned the ruler large sums of money. To start, he leased this profitable establishment for a year, but at the end of his term he donated some 200 kg. of silver for use of the mint, and remained at his post, notably prospering. Ingratiating himself with Sigismundus with all Jewish cleverness, Jezofovičius did not prosper materially only. In 1510 we find him in the high Lithuanian post of Treasurer, where he remained until his death in 1519. In that period, he became very wealthy, and advanced socially as well. He became the king's banker, acquired tax rights, received large holdings in Lithuania, forced his way even into the Senate with his financial projects, etc. In a word, he became a leading "Lithuanian," easily finding "warm" spots, able to exploit his native Semitic abilities.

Perhaps Abraham served his lord conscientiously, to earn so many favors, but we must here state that this rebaptised gentleman's prosperity grew mostly through the coin mint. One extant account shows that in 1508-9, there should have been struck 5,379,800 half-grašiai coins, of which only 720,000 found their way into the Treasury, while the remainder a "lions share," about 4,659,800 half-grašiai, amounting to 2,329,900 grašiai total, went for the purchase of silver, the maintenance of the mint, and the leasee's profit. According to subsidiary accounts, the silver necessary to strike all those half-grašiai cost about 1,397,940 grašiai, so that administration, labor and other costs, together with profit to the lessee amounted to about 932,000 grašiai. About that time, a work horse cost about 70 grašiai, a cow, 60; a pig, 20; a sheep, 4-5; a goose, 2 grašiai, while for a long laborous day with a work horse a man was paid 1.5 grašiai.¹³ All the mint's maintenance costs, let us say, would hardly have exceeded 432,000 grašiai. It would seem

¹³ See Stan. Rosenberg's "Rozwoj i geneza folwarku panszczyznianego" (Pnznanskie Towarzystwo Pryjaciol Nauk. t. IV, 1927). These costs are also found in Historical Sources, Vol. I.

At the beginning as always, the production of the mint was not large, but it increased yearly. In the year 1514 it issued about 10 million half-grašiai.

Following his brother's example, Sigismundus engraved upon his half-grašis coins: "MONETA SIGISMUNDI;" on the reverse: "MAGNI DUCIS LITUANIE," that is, a coin of the Grand Duke Sigismundus, not the Grand Duchy's but the Grand Duke's. It was only upon his grašis coins as we shall see, this formula changed to "MAGNI DUCATUS," clearly emphasizing on the coins that they were the Grand Duchy's, and not the ruler's, but the state's coins.

The Knight [Vytis] is still in the first place upon Sigismundus' half-grašiai, and the Polish eagle is in the second place. There were also crosses in specific places, which on later Lithuanian coins were significantly rarer, or were replaced by other marks. Over a period of 20 years and more of work in the mint, the producers/minters of the half-grašiai made many replacement dies, as witnessed by many noticeable errors found among the coins, various abbreviations, and an entire series of discrepancies. As an example, instead of Sigismund, in places it is inscribed Sigismaundi; elsewhere, Sigismunei; in place of Lithuania (Lithuaniae) Lituania, Litania, Lituanen; in place of moneta (coin): monea; Abbreviations are made as convenient: moneta--mone. magni--magn; 1516, only 16, etc. Among the inscriptions, there are spread circles and dots, but even they are not uniform. They indicate whenever possible, on the obverse side the series of the coins. On the reverse, the series of issues. From those marks it is evident that a tremendous amount of half-grašiai were struck, since in 1512 alone, there were five series of coins, each with 4 issues. In 1513, there were the same number of series each with 5 issues. There were more of those fives. Half-grašiai coins with no marks would constitute other issues. In the period 1528-29 on the half-grašiai, below the Vytis, a tiny "v" was inserted (See figure 76/4). This has been explained in many ways, but we believe that the "v" represents the locale of the mint at Vilnius. It seems that the ruler of both states, Sigismundus, issuing coins bearing the crests of both his subject states, recognized (or was inspired by Lithuanians) that by at least one letter Lithuanian coins should be designated as being prepared not at Cracow, where their issuer resided, but in the capital of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy.

Sigismundus the Elder's half-grašis weighed on an average about 1.295 gr. There was about 0.490 gr. of pure silver in each, therefore the content and obviously the real worth, equalled the content and worth of Alexander's half-grašis. We must not look for exact figures here, since both the weight and the metallic content